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## Overcoming the Tendency to Backtrack

by Scott Stoner

*Don't look back, you're not going that way.*

—Anonymous

Once we muster the courage to decide to change directions, however small that change in direction may be, we soon discover that this decision is actually a series of ongoing decisions. Once we are on our new course, we soon find that we have to continue to make the decision to stay on course, even when we are tempted to turn around.

I can easily imagine that the Samaritan woman at the well experienced some degree of second-guessing her experience with Jesus. As she walked back to town, she could have made the safe decision to not let her encounter with Jesus change anything in her life. She must have wondered if people would believe her when she shared her experience. Would they be willing to see her differently? She must have been tempted to go back and act as if nothing had happened.

We know from the story of the Exodus journey that the people who were journeying with Moses in the wilderness had their moments of wanting to turn around and go back to the familiarity of what they had known in Egypt. This is as true for organizations as it is for individuals. Who among us doesn't know of a business, church, or other organization that would rather choose to continue to decline than change direction? Changing direction is hard work—even when we know that what we are leaving behind is not working for us—because it requires us to look at ourselves honestly and make hard, often courageous, decisions.

**Making It Personal:** Can you think of a time when you struggled with the desire to “go back” after you made a decision to make a change in your life? Are you experiencing that struggle in your life right now? Have you ever been, or are you currently, part of an organization, church, or institution that gives up and wants to “go back” when the work of change gets hard and requires courage?